

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1926

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SU, US

SUBJ: DISCUSSION OF US-SUDANESE RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN
MINISTRY

REF: KHARTOUM 1795

1. SUMMARY: SUDANESE OFFICIALS, EXPRESSING THEIR WISH FOR GOOD US-SUDANESE RELATIONS, HAVE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN, OR EXCUSE, THE RELEASE OF THE EIGHT TERRORISTS BY REFERRING BOTH TO THE DIFFICULT POLITICAL SITUATION IN WHICH ARAB STATES FIND THEMSELVES IN MATTERS OF THIS SORT AND TO THE CERTAIN RETALIATION THAT WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED IMPRISONMENT IN THE SUDAN. OUR RESPONSE HAS BEEN TO REPEAT THE US STATEMENT OF JUNE 25 AND TO REAFFIRM ITS VALIDITY. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE' WAS SUMMONED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY ON AUG. 17 FOR SUCCESSIVE MEETINGS WITH ISA MUSTAFA, DIRECTOR GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE DEPT., AND HASHIM OSMAN AHMED, DIR. GENERAL TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION AND LIAISON AND ACTING UNDER SECRETARY.

3. FOLLOWING SOME SMALL TALK, INCLUDING THE FACT THAT HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE THSSCOUNTRY DURING THE PERIOD OF COMMUNIST ASCENDANCY, MUSTAFA SAID HE
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HOPED TIME WOULD HEAL THE WOUNDS INFLICTED ON US-

SUDANESE RELATIONS BY RECENT EVENTS. THE MURDERERS WERE MONSTERS, HE SAID, AND ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MARCH 1973 SIEGE PRESIDENT NIMEIRI HAD ACTUALLY GIVEN AN ORDER TO BOMB THE SAUDI EMBASSY, SO STRONGLY DID HE FEEL ABOUT THE TERRORIST ATTACK. MUSTAFA WENT ON TO SAY THAT "POLITICS HAS NO HEART" AND THAT "THERE ARE STORMS BEFORE WHICH MAN CANNOT STAND". HE ADDED THAT SUDANESE AMBASSADORS ABROAD BEGAN RECEIVING EXPLICIT THREATS WHEN THE TERRORISTS WERE FIRST DETAINED, AND THAT SECURITY MEASURES HAD BEEN INSTITUTED EVERYWHERE. IF THE TERRORISTS HAD BEEN HELD FOLLOWING THE TRIAL, MORE LIVES WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN

LOST IN RETALIATORY ATTACKS. MUSTAFA ENDED HIS PRESENTATION WITH THE STATEMENT THAT, IF THE US ABANDONS THE SUDAN, THE COMMUNISTS WILL SEEK TO FILL THE GAP.

4. THE AVING UNDER SECRETARY, AFTER EXPRESSING ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR THE US AND SAYING THAT SUDANESE VALUE FRANKNESS ABOVE ALL IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS, LAUNCHED INTO THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION TO RELEASE THE TERRORISTS. AS A YOUNG COUNTRY, THE SUDAN MAKES MISTAKES IN THE INTERNATIONAL AREA AND HOPES OTHERS WILL MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR THIS UNDERSTANDABLE FAILING. POLITICAL PRESSURES SOMETIMES FORCE DECISIONS THAT OTHERWISE WOULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED. OTHER MORE POWERFUL GOVERNMENTS, SUCH AS THE FRG, HAVE RELEASED TERRORISTS IN ORDER TO AVOID RETALIATION. HOW CAN SMALLER ARAB STATES BE EXPECTED TO ACT MORE COURAGEOUSLY? IF PUNISHING THE TERRORISTS WOULD HAVE BROUGHT THE MURDERED DIPLOMATS BACK TO LIFE, THE SUDA WOULD HAVE PUNISHED THEM AT ANY PRICE. BUT THE LIVES WERAUIRRETRIEVABLY LOST, AND THE SUDAN WISHED TO AVOID THE RETALIATION AND ENDLESS CYCLE OF RETRIBUTION THAT INEVITABLY WOULD HAVE FOLLOQID IMPRISONMENT.

5. SENSING THAT THE FIRST MEETING WAS BY WAY OF PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND, CHARGE' LIMITED HIS RESPONSE TO MUSTAFA TO A REITERATION OF THE SISCO STATEMENT OF JUNE 25 (STATE 136126) AND, WITH RESPECT TO MUSTAFA'S CONCLUDING REMARK, THE OBSERVATION THAT THE SUDANESE THEMSELVES WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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BEST PLACED TO WEIGHT THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF COMMUNIST OPPORTUNISM.

6. CHARGE' TOLD HASHIM OSMAN AHMED THAT THE USG, CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE STILL SHARE THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY SISCO. WE ALSO VALUE FRANKNESS,BUT THE SUDANESE HAD BEEN LESS THAN FRANK IN KEEPING THE US INFORMED OF THEIR PLANS FOR DISPOSITION OF THE TERRORIST

CASE. NO MATTER WHAT ACTION OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAD TAKEN WITH RESPECT TO TERRORISM, THE US COULD NOT VIEW ABSTRACTLY THE MURDER OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OR THE DISCOURTESY SHOWN HIS SUCCESSOR IN MISINFORMING HIM. CHARGE' SAID THAT, IN GENERAL, THE US HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE END OF TERRORISM LIES NOT IN REWARDING IT BUT RATHER IN CONCERTED AND STRONG INTERNATIONAL ACTION AGAINST IT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT POLITICAL PRESSURES ARE DIFFICULT TO WITHSTAND BUT ARE CONVINCED THEY MUST BE MET WITH STRENGTH. CONCERNING AHMED'S PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING FOR THE IMPOTENCE OF SMALLER ARAB STATES, CHARGE' EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT ARAB STATES HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO BRING SPECIAL INFLUENCE TO BEAR TO INDUCE REASONABLENESS AND MODERATION IN THE PALESTINIANS.

7. COMMENT: BOTH INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED IN

FRIENDLY FASHION, WITH BOTH SUDANESE OFFICIALS OBVIOUSLY INTENT ON SMOKING OUT THE CURRENT US POSITION. NO REFERENCE WAS MADE TO US ASSISTANCE OR TO SPECIFIC AID PROJECTS, HOWEVER, AND THE OVERALL IMPRESSION RECEIVED WAS THAT THE SUDANESE ARE CONTENT TO WAIT IT OUT AND HOPE FOR A RETURN TO NORMALCY. BERLIND

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